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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Special Political Committee (A/46/637)]

46/45. International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 45/72 of 11 December 1990,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and of the importance of international cooperation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Gravely concerned about the extension of an arms race into outer space,

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Aware of the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to the socio-economic advancement of mankind, in particular that of the people of developing countries,

Considering that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

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Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and application as well as in various national and cooperative space projects, which contribute to international cooperation in this field,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General 1/ on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, 2/

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its thirty-fourth session, 3/

1. Endorses the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space; 3/

2. Invites States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space 4/ to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties;

3. Notes that, at its thirtieth session, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in its working groups, continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in resolution 45/72; 5/

4. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee that the Legal Subcommittee, at its thirty-first session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, particularly those of developing countries, should:

(a) Continue, through its working group, the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear-power sources in outer space with the aim of finalizing the draft set of principles at its next session;

(b) Continue, through its working group, its consideration of matters relating to the definition and delimitations of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration

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1/ A/46/389.

2/ See Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 9-21 August 1982 (A/CONF.101/10 and Corr.1 and 2).

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/46/20).

4/ Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 2222 (XXI), annex); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 2345 (XXII), annex); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (resolution 2777 (XXVI), annex); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 3235 (XXIX), annex); Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 34/68, annex).

5/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/46/20), sect. II.C.

of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union;

(c) Continue, through its working group, its consideration of the legal aspects related to the application of the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries;

5. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee concerning the organization of work in the Legal Subcommittee;

6. Notes that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its twenty-eighth session, continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/72; 6/

7. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its twenty-ninth session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, particularly those of developing countries, should:

(a) Consider the following items on a priority basis:

(i) United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the coordination of space activities within the United Nations system;

(ii) Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space; 2/

(iii) Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellites including, inter alia, applications for developing countries;

(iv) Use of nuclear-power sources in outer space;

(b) Consider the following items:

(i) Questions relating to space transportation systems and their implications for future activities in space;

(ii) Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit; examination of its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to space communications developments, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries;

(iii) Matters relating to life sciences, including space medicine;

6/ Ibid., sect. II.B.

(iv) Progress in national and international space activities related to the Earth environment, in particular progress in the geosphere-biosphere (global change) programme;

(v) Matters relating to planetary exploration;

(vi) Matters relating to astronomy;

(vii) The theme fixed for special attention at the 1992 session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee: "Space technology and the protection of the Earth's environment: development of endogenous capabilities, in particular in the developing countries and in the context of International Space Year"; the Committee on Space Research and the International Astronautical Federation, in liaison with Member States, should be invited to arrange a symposium, with as wide a participation as possible, to be held during the first week of the Subcommittee's session, to complement discussions within the Subcommittee on the special theme;

8. Considers, in the context of paragraph 7 (a) (ii) above, that it is particularly urgent to implement the following recommendations:

(a) All countries should have the opportunity to use the techniques resulting from medical studies in space;

(b) Data banks at the national and regional levels should be strengthened and expanded and an international space information service should be established to function as a centre of coordination;

(c) The United Nations should support the creation of adequate training centres at the regional level, linked, whenever possible, to institutions implementing space programmes; necessary funding for the development of such centres should be made available through financial institutions;

(d) The United Nations should organize a fellowship programme through which selected graduates or post-graduates from developing countries should get in-depth, long-term exposure to space technology or applications; it is also desirable to encourage the availability of opportunities for such exposure on other bilateral and multilateral bases outside the United Nations system;

9. Endorses the recommendation of the Committee that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should reconvene, at its twenty-ninth session, the Working Group of the Whole to Evaluate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, to continue its work;

10. Also endorses the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, as endorsed by the Committee and as contained in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the report of the Working Group of the Whole; 7/

7/ A/AC.105/483, annex II.

11. Decides that, during the twenty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space should be reconvened;

12. Endorses the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 1992, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications, 8/ and urges all States to make voluntary contributions to the Programme in order to enhance its effectiveness;

13. Emphasizes the urgency and importance of implementing fully the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as early as possible;

14. Takes note with interest of the offer of the Government of Chile to host a space conference, with a view to enhancing international cooperation in the context of the peaceful uses of outer space, including the applications of space science and technology;

15. Reaffirms its approval of the recommendation of the Conference regarding the establishment and strengthening of regional mechanisms of cooperation and their promotion and creation through the United Nations system;

16. Expresses its appreciation to all Governments that have made or expressed their intention to make contributions towards carrying out the recommendations of the Conference;

17. Invites all Governments to take effective action for the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference;

18. Requests all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations working in the field of outer space or on space-related matters to cooperate in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference;

19. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session on the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference;

20. Urges Member States, international organizations and other funding sources to support the activities of the United Nations as part of International Space Year, 1992;

21. Reiterates its recommendation that Member States, in planning their activities for International Space Year, consider ways in which those activities could complement the efforts under way for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development planned for 1992;

22. Recommends that in 1992 the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should dedicate at least one meeting of their regular sessions to International Space Year;

23. Also recommends that more attention be paid to all aspects related to the protection and the preservation of the outer space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth's environment;

8/ See A/AC.105/478, sects. I and III.

24. Considers that it is essential that Member States pay more attention to the problem of collisions with space debris and other aspects of space debris and calls for the continuation of national research on this question, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on space debris, and that, to the extent possible, information thereon should be provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in order to allow it to follow this area more closely;

25. Requests the Secretary-General to invite Member States to provide information on their national research on space debris to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee;

26. Also considers that space debris could be an appropriate subject for in-depth discussion by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in the future;

27. Urges all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes;

28. Takes note of the views expressed during the thirty-fourth session of the Committee and during the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly concerning ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes;

29. Requests the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session;

30. Also requests the Committee to continue to consider, at its thirty-fifth session, its agenda item entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status";

31. Requests the specialized agencies and other international organizations to continue and, where appropriate, enhance their cooperation with the Committee and to provide it with progress reports on their work relating to the peaceful uses of outer space;

32. Further requests the Committee to continue its work, in accordance with the present resolution, to consider, as appropriate, new projects in outer space activities and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, including its views on which subjects should be studied in the future.

66th plenary meeting
9 December 1991